

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 286713

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PLOS PBOR JO IS SY

SUBJECT:MAQARIN DAM PROJECT

REF: STATE 281812

1. SUMMARY. ISRAELI CHARGE BARON CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON NOVEMBER 19 TO DISCUSS MAQARIN DAM/ YARMOUK RIVER STUDY. BARON EMPHASIZED THAT ISRAEL REQUIRES CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION ON MAQARIN PROJECT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO MAKE EARLY TECHNICAL INPUTS INTO FEASIBILITY STUDY BEFORE MAJOR PROBLEMS ARISE. SPECIFICALLY, HE REQUESTED TERMS OF REFERENCE OF HARZA STUDY, TEXT OF INTERIM REPORT, AND TEXT OF FINAL REPORT UPON ITS COMPLETION. BARON EMPHASIZED THAT THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED WOULD BE THROUGH A JOINT ISRAELI-JORDANIAN WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND SUGGESTED THE INITIATION OF DISCREET JOINT ISRAELI-JORDANIAN CONTACTS, POSSIBLY THROUGH GOOD OFFICES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 286713

OF USG. BAR-ON INDICATED GOI MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS ARE TO

ENSURE THAT MAQARIN PROJECT IS NOT DETRIMENTAL TO ISRAEL.
ATHERTON ASSURED BAR-ON THAT ISRAEL WILL BE FULLY CONSULTED
BEFORE USG DECIDED WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT AND

STATED THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH AID AND REVIEW
HARZA INTERIM REPORT BEFORE HE COULD REPLY TO ISRAELI RE-
QUEST FOR INFORMATION. END SUMMARY.

2. AT HIS REQUEST, ISRAELI CHARGE BARON, ACCOMPANIED BY
POLITICAL COUNSELOR BENTSUR, MET WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON TO DISCUSS ISRAELI INTERESTS IN MAQARIN DAM/
YARMOUK RIVER PROJECT STUDY. ALSO PRESENT WERE DEPUTY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAY AND ISRAELI AND JORDANIAN DESK
OFFICERS.

3. BARON READ AND CIRCULATED FOLLOWING SECRET BRIEF
ENTITLED "THE JORDANIAN YARMOUK PROJECT". BEGIN TEXT:

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ALLON, IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE ON
11 OCTOBER 1976, MENTIONED ISRAEL'S CONCERN WITH SOME OF
THE IMPLICATIONS FOR ISRAEL OF THE MAQARIN DAM PROJECT.

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME BRIEF REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT:

IT SHOULD BE SAID FROM THE OUTSET THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT
OBJECT, IN PRINCIPLE, TO THE JORDANIAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
BUT, RATHER, IT IS CONCERNED AT WHAT SUCH A PROJECT MIGHT
MEAN TO THE WATER SUPPLY OF THE REGION IN GENERAL AND TO
THAT OF ISRAEL IN PARTICULAR.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAQARIN DAM WOULD AFFECT THE
AVAILABILITY OF WATER AND THUS ENDANGER ISRAEL'S ENTITLE-
MENT TO WATER AS ENVISAGED IN THE JOHNSTON PLAN. IT IS
ENTIRELY LIKELY THAT THE RIVER JORDAN SOUTH OF THE LAKE OF
GALILEE MIGHT DISAPPEAR. IT IS ALSO A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY
THAT THE WATER LEVEL OF THE DEAD SEA WOULD BE SERIOUSLY
AFFECTED SO AS TO TURN ITS SOUTHERN PART INTO A SALT DESERT
WITH ALL THAT THIS WOULD IMPLY FOR THE EXISTING ENTERPRISES
AND PLANNED PROJECTS IN THAT REGION OF THE COUNTRY. THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 286713

WATER SUPPLY OF THE JORDAN VALLEY COULD ALSO BE SERIOUSLY
AFFECTED.

HENCE, SUCH A PROJECT CANNOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF EITHER OF
THE PARTIES AND SHOULD NOT BE ON A UNILATERAL BASIS. AN
AGREED DEVELOPMENT PLAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD ENABLE
ISRAEL, ON ITS PART, NOT ONLY TO ENJOY ITS RIGHT BUT TO
CONTRIBUTE ITS SHARE IN THE FIELD OF ENERGY SUPPLY,

EXPLOITATION OF THE DEAD SEASOURCES, AND IN THE AREAS WHICH SUCH PROJECTS MAY EMBRACE.

THE QUESTION OF WATER AVAILABILITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE A CARDINAL PROBLEM, AS WAS DEMONSTRATED, FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THE LONG, DRAWN OUT NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO THE JOHNSTON PLAN. IT IS IN OUR VIEW DEFINITELY POSSIBLE TO COORDINATE THE JORDANIAN PLANS WITH THOSE OF ISRAEL WITH THE VIEW TO ARRIVING AT A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND ACCOMMODATION. LACKING SUCH, A SITUATION MIGHT ARISE WHICH COULD LEAD TO CONFRONTATION WHICH ISRAEL, ON ITS PART, WANTS TO AVOID.

IT IS CLEAR FROM THE ABOVE THAT JORDAN-ISRAELI COORDINATION ON THIS PROJECT THROUGH DISCREET CONTACTS WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO PROCEED. THE GOAL OF SUCH CONTACTS SHOULD BE TO ARRIVE AT COORDINATED OR INTEGRATED ISRAEL-JORDAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

THE AID HAS ALREADY INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO CONSULT ISRAEL PRIOR TO ANY APPROVAL OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING STAGE OF THE MAQARIN DAM PROJECT. ISRAEL IN APPRECIATING THIS WILL BE IN A POSITION TO FORMULATE ITS VIEWS AFTER BEING FULLY INFORMED OF DETAILS OF THE PROJECT. SUCH INFORMATION WOULD ENABLE US TO EXAMINE THOROUGHLY THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED AND, IN CASE OF NEED, MAKE ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS, BEARING IN MIND THE INTERESTS OF BOTH PARTIES AND WITHOUT HARMING JORDAN'S DEVELOPMENT INTENTIONS.

IT IS IN THIS LIGHT THAT OUR REQUEST TO AID TO FURNISH US WITH THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY AND THE PRELIMINARY REPORT PREPARED ON THE MAQARIN DAM PROJECT SHOULD BE VIEWED. WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THIS AND, OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 286713

COURSE, THE FINAL REPORT, AS WELL AS ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION WHICH WOULD ENABLE ISRAEL EXPERTS TO DRAW UP SPECIFICS WHICH WOULD BE USEFUL IN THIS DIRECTION. END TEXT.

4. BARON EMPHASIZED THAT MAQARIN PROJECT SHOULD NOT BE UNILATERAL, NOTING THAT SEEDS OF POSSIBLE NEW CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN EXIST IF PROJECT IS PLANNED AND IMPLEMENTED ON UNILATERAL BASIS. AS WHATEVER ONE OF THE PARTY DOES UNILATERALLY AFFECTS THE OTHER STATES IN THE REGION, BARON ARGUED FOR A JOINT WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AND REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO THE JOHNSTON PLAN. BARON ALSO SUGGESTED THAT DISCREET JORDANIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS MIGHT BE ARRANGED THROUGH GOOD OFFICES OF USG. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO RULE OUT JOINT PROJECT BUT HOPED ISRAEL IS NOT SAYING THAT IT MUST BE EITHER A

JOINT PROJECT OR NOTHING. BARON ASSURED ATHERTON THAT THIS IS NOT REPEAT NOT GOI POSITION.

5. IN REQUESTING HARZA INTERIM REPORT, BARON EXPLAINED ISRAEL NEEDS THIS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION ASAP IN ORDER TO MAKE EARLY TECHNICAL INPUTS INTO PROJECT STUDY BEFORE MAJOR PROBLEMS ARISE. ATHERTON NOTED THAT THE INTERIM REPORT CONTAINS ONLY TECHNICAL OPTIONS. BARON REPLIED THAT GOI WANTS TO REVIEW HOW TECHNICAL OPTIONS AFFECT ISRAEL AND POSSIBLY TO ADD OTHER OPTIONS. HE QUESTIONED WHETHER HARZA HAS ENOUGH TECHNICAL DATA ON ISRAEL NECESSARY TO MAKE VALID RECOMMENDATIONS. ATHERTON ASSURED BARON U.S. IS CONSCIOUS OF POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROJECT ON ISRAEL AND ADDED THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THE REASONS THE DEPARTMENT ASKED PROFESSOR BAXTER TO UNDERTAKE STUDY IN CONTEXT OF WHICH BAXTER SUBMITTED QUESTIONS TO GOI THROUGH EMBASSY TEL AVIV. ATHERTON EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES WILL MEET WITH BAXTER SOON TO ANSWER HIS QUESTIONS. BARON NOTED THAT BAXTER'S STUDY IS LEGAL RATHER THAN TECHNICAL AND DID NOT REPLY TO ATHERTON'S REQUEST THAT GOI RESPOND TO BAXTER'S QUESTIONS.

6. IN CONCLUSION, ATHERTON INFORMED ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH AID OFFICIALS AND REVIEW HARZA INTERIM REPORT BEFORE REPLYING TO ISRAELI REQUEST FOR CONFIDENTIAL COPY OF REPORT. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 286713

AT WHATEVER POINT CONSULTATIONS BEGAN WITH ISRAEL, GOI WOULD NOT APPLY AS ABSOLUTE CRITERIA FOR MAQARIN PROJECT REQUIREMENT FOR CONTRIBUTION TO JOINT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH JORDAN AND ISRAEL. BARON REPLIED THAT GOI MUST APPLY CRITERIA CONCERNING THE DIRECT EFFECTS OF PROJECT ON ISRAEL AND ADDED THAT MAQARIN PROJECT SHOULD NOT PRECLUDE POSSIBILITIES OF WIDER ECONOMIC COOPERATION. KISSINGER

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